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ABSTRACT

Case studies in six schools in two school districts were used to document the practice of school-based examining in action: identifying the reasons why teachers use it, the problems they encounter, and the various pay-offs which arise. Four ways of using school-based examining were identified: to ease externally-imposed organizational change; to respond to individual teaching problems; to review courses which differ from those "on offer" from the various examination boards; and to forward the ideals of comprehensive education, in particular the principle of equal opportunity. School-based examining is a significant mechanism used by teachers engaged in curriculum development, and that experience might be useful when considering accountability in terms of self-evaluation. (Author/BW)

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SCHOOL-BASED EXAMINING IN ENGLAND : A FOCUS FOR SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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American Educational Research Association
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Abstract:

The paper describes the context and work of a recently completed study of school-based examining in English secondary schools - "School-Based Examining and the Professional Development of Teachers". The paper reports on the contribution which school-based examining can make to the professional development of teachers, and outlines the conditions which sustain school-based examining in the long term. It is argued that school-based examining is a significant mechanism used by teachers engaged in curriculum development and that experience so gained might be useful when considering accountability in terms of self-evaluation.

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Introduction : Post-war examining in England

Atkin & House's (1981) recent review of post-war curriculum development in America suggests that a very major concern of developers has been to stiffen the academic backbone of the High School curriculum: up to the 1950s it was thought to be too general, too focussed on the needs of what one might call the average student, providing insufficient academic grounding for the scientists and technicians of the future. In England, if anything, the reverse is the case. After the 1944 Education Act our secondary schools (High Schools) were divided into two types - grammar schools for the academically able and secondary modern schools for the academically less able. Technical High Schools were also envisaged by the 1944 Act - for the practically able - but were not widely instituted. About 20% of students at age 11+ therefore went to schools with an extremely academic curriculum; schools which were geared to university entrance and taught to syllabuses issued by the University-controlled Examination Boards. Students thus worked towards externally devised and set examinations in individual subjects, to be rewarded if successful with individual subject passes in their General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) at Ordinary(O)-level (age 16) and Advanced(A)-level (age 18). Students at secondary modern schools worked towards very little, unless their individual school happened to issue a leaving certificate (sometimes awarded as a local leaving certificate in collaboration with neighbouring schools) or worked towards vocational examinations which were really designed for older students. With the comprehensivation of our secondary school system, the grammar tradition seemed likely to dominate the whole of secondary education much more directly, so initiatives in curriculum development in the 1960s tended to concentrate

on broadening, or making more relevant, the secondary curriculum for those who had no intention of remaining in school beyond the minimum age. Even now, however, indeed perhaps more so than ever, G.C.E. O-level and A-level are regarded as the yardsticks against which achievement in secondary schools should be measured.

However, attention had also been paid during the 1950s to the lack of purpose which was felt in the secondary modern sector, and a second examination system was formally launched in 1963 to cater for what was described in the Below Report of 1960 as the next 40% of the ability range. This second system was specifically designed to provide nationally recognised school leaving certificates, rather than an academic grounding for potential university entrants. The system was organised regionally, under teacher control, and provided for students to sit individual subject examinations at age 16 for Certificates of Secondary Education (C.S.E.). The examinations could be devised and set externally by the (teacher controlled) Regional Examination Board or internally by teachers themselves in individual schools, or in groups of schools.

School-based examining

Internally designed and set examinations were, and are, termed school-based, though aspects of externally designed examinations can also be school-based. School-based examining has in fact been a subject of discussion in England for many years. As long ago as 1911 a Consultative Committee to the Board of Education listed the pros and cons of public

examining, while specifically school-based procedures were envisaged and discussed positively by such crucial reports as Norwood in 1943 (preceding the 1944 Education Act) and Beloe in 1960 (preceding the instigation of the Certificate of Secondary Education (C.S.E.).

School-based examining then, means that teachers in secondary schools can devise and operate their own syllabuses and examinations within their own schools. The resulting rank-ordered grades are externally moderated by teachers from other schools working for the relevant regional examination board, and certificates awarded by that board. School-based examinations can be, and often are, of the 'traditional' final paper type. But project work is also often set and assessed as is oral work and ordinary course work (continuous assessment). Thus school-based examining has become associated with innovations in assessment practices, as well as assessment procedures. In principle it allows teachers to match educational provision to local needs and resources as well as generally allowing closer integration of teaching and examining.

The most visible formal expression of this type of examination is Mode III in C.S.E. G.C.E. boards also moderate such examinations but in much smaller numbers. Macintosh (1976) reported that:

> *"The numbers of teachers directly involved in Mode III is still ... relatively small ... in 1975 22.4 per cent of all C.S.E. subject entries were made through Mode III. The corresponding figure for O level is of the order of 1 per cent."*
>
> (pp 85-6)

Data collected during the current study suggest in fact that numbers of Mode III entries continued to grow until the late 1970s before levelling off to a plateau. They thus remain very much in the minority as regards overall examination entries, but this is nevertheless a significant

minority and experience suggests that most schools do run, or have run, some Mode III schemes.

The use of school-based examining is not simply restricted to Mode III entries however. The distinction between school-based and board-based examinations is not so clear cut. Internal assessment can operate within all three modes of examining to improve the validity and reliability of examinations. Mixed mode examinations are becoming more common, comprising for example a syllabus set by the board but continuously assessed by teachers. Sometimes only a percentage of the final assessment will be based on continuous assessment, with the remainder based on an externally set and marked examination paper or papers. It should also be noted that continuous assessment is not a uniform practice and need not necessarily be wholly conducted by teachers: it might comprise the recording of course work marks, or the recording of the ten best marks throughout the course, or the recording of marks from regularly administered tests set apart from course work, and all of these marks could be awarded by the class teacher or an external examiner. The permutations, as is becoming clear, are almost endless, but the formal distinctions remain as Mode I (externally designed syllabus and examination), Mode II (syllabuses designed by the school or a group of schools with the examination designed by the board) and Mode III (syllabuses and examinations designed by the school).

The origins of this study

Since its inception with C.S.E. in 1963, Mode III has been hailed by its supporters as a radical re-thinking of assessment procedures, as a welcome stimulus for school-based curriculum development, and as a necessary and timely reflection of the professionalism of teaching. Yet the growth in the use of Mode III is perhaps not as great as it might have been. Arguments in favour of Mode III include those outlined above with respect to school-based examining, but they usually centre on the idea of liberating teachers and teaching from external constraints so that they can provide educational experiences appropriate to their setting, circumstance, and interests. Yet is is precisely the same point which generates criticism; without external constraints, what will happen to academic standards, and how can we be sure that grades will be reliable across schools? As early as 1967 Schools Council Examinations Bulletin no. 15 was addressing such fears. In describing the results of two school-based examinations, in English and Physics, it reported that "a reassuring feature of the exercise was the patent reliability of assessment by experienced teachers" (p 8) and:

> *"The initial feeling of doubt over the teachers' competence to organise such an exercise had been largely dissipated as a result of the experience, and the experiment as a whole showed how effectively like-minded schools can produce reliable assessments of their pupils."*
>
> (p 31)

Since then a number of other studies have been carried out, highlighting a range of practical problems which are inherent in school-based examining, as well as investigating the validity and reliability of the system. Hoste and Bloomfield (1975), Smith (1976) and Cohen and

Deale (1977) for example have reviewed various problems, particularly the demands which school-based examining makes on teacher time and school resources, but they have done so using data derived from questionnaires which were poorly responded to, or interviews which were reviewed out of context. Thus there have been few suggestions as to the conditions which might stimulate and sustain good school-based examining practice, few suggestions as to why practical problems loom larger for some teachers and not others. It has in fact been claimed by some teachers that there can be unforseen professional benefits to be derived from engaging in Mode III work, benefits which may therefore sustain Mode III schemes which might otherwise have faded. Clark (1971) and Rowe (1978) report on the value of working with colleagues to produce Mode III syllabuses. The experience of designing Mode III examinations and negotiating their passage through the Regional Examination Board's subject panels was important for the professional development of those who took part. It could be argued from such evidence that school-based examining might therefore contribute to the raising of academic standards in schools.

Methodology

The study was designed to investigate such ideas. The aspiration of the study was to document the practice of school-based examining - particularly Mode III examining - in action:- identifying the reasons why teachers use Mode III; the problems they encounter - forseen and unforseen; and the various pay-offs which arise - again, some of which were expected and prompted the development in the first place, some of

which were quite unexpected. At the same time however the study aimed to penetrate as fully as possible those general issues which might emerge across schools. A case study approach was adopted therefore because the notion of discovering previously unconsidered problems and benefits rendered a pre-specified survey investigation inappropriate. Further than this however, case studies were conducted across several sites so that perceptions of the worth and potential of school-based examining might be investigated as fully as possible in context while also allowing conclusions to be drawn across the contexts about the conditions which allow problems to be confronted and benefits to accrue. Because the case studies were so highly focussed to begin with - on school-based examining - they could be completed relatively quickly, following periods of condensed fieldwork (Walker 1974). Drafts of each of the studies were then sent to the schools concerned for comments and amendments in terms of their accuracy, relevance and fairness, before being written into the final report.

The conduct of the research

Data was gathered by interviewing teachers in six schools across two Local Education Authorities (School Districts) - one in East Anglia and one in the North East of England. These localities were chosen in order to investigate school-based examining under different regional examination boards and under differing socio-economic conditions. In fact differing school policies and traditions seemed the more significant variables, though local context had indirect impact - helping to shape, but also being mediated by, these policies and traditions. The particular

schools were identified with the help of the local authority school advisory service in each area. Schools were selected to reflect a range of Mode III experience: numbers of subjects involved, length of involvement, current policies and practices. Altogether seventy-nine teachers were interviewed; the interviews were unstructured and tape-recorded, the resulting transcripts forming the primary data base. These transcripts were edited versions of the full interview, produced after the researcher had re-listened to all the tapes (school by school). The teachers worked in schools which operated very varied numbers of Mode III schemes - as few as two in one case and as many as sixteen in another. Those interviewed included teachers who had engaged in Mode III work, and were engaged in Mode III work, and those who had not engaged in Mode III, some of whom had no intention of ever doing so. Of these, some had had experience of marking their own students' work for Mode I examinations - marking project work for example, or conducting oral examinations. Some of those interviewed were moderators, or were also moderators in addition to being Mode III teachers. Documentary evidence about each school (history, current curriculum, etc.) and about most, but not all, of the school-based examinations in which teachers were engaged, was also collected. Similarly documentary evidence from examination boards was collected, with specific reference to Mode III submissions and entries, to provide a brief overall picture of recent trends. Appropriate examination board personnel in each region were also interviewed, as were Careers Officers and Further Education personnel who had contact with the schools involved.

Findings : teacher perspectives on the worth and potential of school-based examining

In reporting the findings of the study I am going to focus on the interviews with teachers. These formed by far the major part of the study, and provide the basis on which to reflect about the original ideas which informed the study, as well as speculate a little about future forms of accountability.

The teachers interviewed offered very varying reasons for why they did or did not engage in school-based examining, and had very varying views with regard to what benefits they thought such work did or did not bring. These are reported in detail in the final report of the study (Torrance 1982). Nevertheless four distinct ways of using school-based examining are apparent in past and present practice:

i) Mode III may be employed as a mechanism for easing externally imposed organisational change;

ii) Mode III may be used as a means of responding to individual and particular teaching or examining problems;

iii) Mode III might be used as a framework within which a subject department can plan, implement and constantly review courses which differ a great deal from those "on offer" from the various examination boards;

iv) Mode III might be used because it is seen to be more appropriate to the ideals of comprehensive education - in particular the principle of equality of opportunity - to which the school is committed.

School-based examinations which constitute the first two categories are less likely to be sustainable in the long term than those which constitute the second two categories. Developments which are responses to particular problems at particular times might be said to be making use of Mode III as an expedient mechanism. Developments which attempt

to bring longer term curricular changes might be said to be making use of Mode III as a transformatory mechanism.

In order to fill out and clarify this categorisation, it is probably worthwhile illustrating it with some of the words of the teachers themselves. Imposed organisational change can be taken to refer to any number of factors located in the history of a particular school, but primarily refers to the raising of the school leaving age (from 15 to 16 in 1974) and to the mergers and amalgamations of schools which were a feature of comprehensivisation. Often, for example, two or three small secondary modern schools were merged with a grammar school to form large, split-site comprehensives. Mode III work was seen by many as a mechanism by which disparate departments could be welded together, and more practically-based courses introduced quickly:

> *"When the school leaving age is raised the whole thing changes. They're staying on, we must be able to offer them something. So you ... offer things that they can do on as wide a range as you can reasonably maintain ..."*

> *"... I ... pushed Mode III pretty hard ... for reasons of staff education and staff status ... in a large comprehensive school you'd got your Head of Department, you might have ... a number ... who'd come in from secondary modern schools, different types, some non-graduates, who were feeling very much out in the cold. And a good Head of Department or a good Headmaster would say 'let's get those people involved ...' ... that motive now of course has disappeared, as teachers now come to accept comprehensive schools as the norm ..."*

It may be however, that such expedient use of school-based examining will find its way back into our secondary school system as teachers confront the socio-economic and organisational problems of the 1980s: for example falling school rolls, or youth unemployment and the concomitant growth of open, comprehensive sixth-forms (16-18 years).

The use of Mode III by individual teachers to confront individual problems might also take place within a context of organisational change, but this need not necessarily be so. The case studies reveal teachers who wish to deliberately teach or assess in a different way, sometimes, for example, using local resources, sometimes using ideas, if not materials, deriving from larger scale curriculum development projects; the studies also reveal teachers who simply wish to motivate troublesome groups of pupils by using the carrot of continuous assessment, or wish to guarantee their marginal subject - Humanities, Social Studies - a place on the fourth and fifth year (14-16 years) timetable by making it examinable. This first teacher started a Mode III course in Cookery, for boys:

> *"... when I first arrived we were doing Mode I only, Home Economics, and I decided that the number of boys getting into the groups, didn't want to do the full range of work ... in the Mode I they have to cover Child Care and Homemaking as well as Cookery ..."*

This second teacher started a Mode III course in Environmental Science, initially just for girls:

> *"It was an accident. I had a class of girls and I didn't know what to do with them. So they said 'Well, you know, could you employ them usefully in either geography or history?' which happens to be my subject, so I said 'Right, I'll combine the two and we'll do some local biology work as well ..."*

Both of these courses are still running, but many others like them are not. The individual teacher faces many problems with regard to time, resources, the constant demands which are made on creativity, and with regard to moderation:

> *"... administratively it does take time ... what perhaps you don't realise ... is that you're going to pick up this incredible volume of work ... just low grade clerking ..."*

"Most of it I write myself ... I've got very few set books ... I produce work cards so that the kids can all work on an individual basis ..."

"... I don't think I realised when I first decided to do the Mode III just how difficult it was to think up different questions every year ..."

".... the worst person is a person who is working alone, in a smallish school, and is not a panel member. He has no idea what's happening, where things are going ..."

Departmental commitment to using school-based examining deliberately, over a long period of time, can certainly be said to confront such problems. This is particularly the case if the school is large enough, and the Headteacher (Principal) sympathetic enough, to make internal promotion (and therefore increases in salary) available for those individuals within a department who take specific responsibility for the administration of schemes. (Much greater numbers of pupils are of course involved when whole departments teach Mode III work, and considerable amounts of paperwork with regard to mark schemes, lists of entrants, etc. are generated.) At the same time other members of the department will be involved in discussing materials and texts, reviewing syllabuses, setting test and/or examination papers, moderating course work grades across classes; thus sharing the workload and creating a forum for the discussion of new ideas.

A Head of Department might be particularly concerned with knowledge-oriented curriculum development (new approaches to Maths, English, History or Geography for example); student-oriented curriculum development (making syllabus content more relevant perhaps); teacher-oriented curriculum development (sustaining team teaching perhaps, or seeking to maintain a level of innovation and enthusiasm throughout

the department); even with a combination of all three, and with a desire to assess by means other than final examination thrown in for good measure. Whatever the initial motive, the commitment of a whole department emerged across the case-studies as crucial to the administrative sustenance of such action in the longer term, as well as being a reservoir of new ideas to keep the innovation alive. Thus one of the departments identified in the study started their scheme in a way similar to that outlined above - to ease a school merger - but benefits were also seen to accrue in the longer term:

> *"... when I first came ... I was faced with grammar school classes going for O-level and a large number of secondary modern classes who were not going for anything unless I chose to make them go for ... Mode III ... I was aware of being a new broom, dealing with strangers, I didn't want to make unreasonable demands ... but everybody could see the need, if we were administering the C.S.E. scheme, to have regular meetings ... these ... had all sorts of spinoffs because of course we got to know each other a lot more quickly ... It still holds the staff together, we still have ... departmental meetings on a regular basis ... it leads to a lot of staff involvement. It's improved our teaching elsewhere in the school ... this feeling of isolation that we have in the classroom has been broken down ..."*

Occasionally the staff of a whole school will make use of school-based examining as an integral part of their programme to put comprehensive ideals into action. And one such school encountered in the study used school-based examining in just this fashion. While this creates the departmental problem of numbers of candidates on a much larger scale, it also creates the conditions of support on an equally large scale, and it provides the students with a uniform approach to teaching and learning whereas one department practising school-based examining within a school may be rather at odds with the others. The policy decision was the Headteacher's, but it had the enthusiastic support of the staff and

indeed staff have been recruited with the continuation of such policy in mind. The Head felt that the school faced particular problems with regard to building a successful comprehensive tradition from the merger of three secondary moderns and was determined to 'fit the exam to the child'. Within this overall policy individual departments focussed on broadening exam opportunities generally, while also using Mode III schemes as a 'safety net' for borderline G.C.E. candidates, or developing certain schemes for the 'less able'. But since Mode III schemes involved such a lot of extra work anyway, the prevailing notion seemed to be that if one was going to do it at all, you might as well do it for all students. As one senior member of staff put it: "We are a Mode III school ". Particular assessment practices vary from department to department, some devising their own examinations for example, others using continuous assessment or a combination of the two, but overall the staff continually create and re-create the conditions whereby commitment can be maintained, both within and across departments:

> *"There's so much Mode III work in this school, members of staff just accept it ... members of staff accept that they have to cover ... members of staff ... moderate ... we cover for them ... if we bitched about it the whole thing wouldn't take place ..."*

All of which is not to say that everything in the garden is rosy. Clustered within the four categories now outlined, and under such key umbrella words as time, resources, creativity, are many individual problems, linked to many individual settings. Stark questions can be posed about whether the current cutbacks in education budgets, which in turn affect photocopying, postage, and telephone calls, as well as the purchase of new books and local authority supply-teacher cover for

moderators, will exacerbate such problems to the point of no return. This has already happened in some cases. We must also remember of course, that the benefits which we are discussing are reported benefits. Nevertheless they do triangulate both within and across departments, and in the "Mode III school" where significant numbers of candidates are entered for G.C.E. examinations after following parallel, often continuously assessed, Mode III C.S.E. courses, final results compare well.

More generally, with regard to the benefits which appear to accrue from school-based examining, one can still ask whether teacher time might be better spent on other aspects of their work? This might be seen to be the case where a Mode III scheme has been set up and is conceived of only as a continuing administrative problem, rather than a rewarding curriculum challenge. In similar vein one might ask whether learning about moderation (either formally as an appointed moderator, or informally as part of a departmental team) does anything to improve competence in assessment? These and many other issues have emerged during the study.

Nevertheless Mode III is clearly valued across all six schools, as a mechanism which allows teachers to respond to particular problems. Further than this however, the main point which emerges across the case-studies is that the problems which are inherent in all school-based examining, problems of curriculum design and anxieties about assessment and moderation, can, if confronted collaboratively, stimulate the professional dialogue on which general improvements in teaching are based. Interestingly enough, although Rutter et al (1979) did not look at the impact of different methods of examining on learning and attainment as

such, they did note that:

> *"... in the less successful schools ... often there was little coordination between teachers in the same department ... teachers in schools with better outcomes ... tended to teach more than one subject. ... Some schools taught integrated programmes which demanded that all teachers taught a range of related subjects."*
>
> (p 113)

Findings from the current study suggest that such good practice can derive from school-based examining. Regular departmental meetings to review and coordinate the operation of internally designed syllabuses and school-based examinations can promote the contact which Rutter et al suggest is important. Thus school-based examining could be seen to be contributing in two ways to overall professional development. The data certainly suggest that actual involvement in designing and implementing Mode IIIs will be one of the most significant ways in which teachers learn to comprehend and confront issues in assessment and moderation. Initial and in-service training or advice on these matters is very limited. But more than this, involvement in continuing long-term enterprises also gives access to understanding problems in curriculum development, management, and teaching; and such understanding has implications and applications well beyond the development of a basic competence to assess pupils.

The case studies also suggest that certain aspects of school-based examining may be significant forerunners of new approaches to teaching, learning and certification in an era of massive and persistent youth unemployment. The evidence here is much less substantial, but many individual teachers clearly regarded their Mode III work as having particular and novel implications for teacher-parent relations, teacher-pupil relations, and the motivation of pupils beyond the instrumentalism

of the certification-employment link:

> *"... as well as giving these homework sheets to the pupils I also give a copy to the parents, you see on Parents' Evenings I've actually got things to give them ... they're involved which must be good ..."*

> *"... since you're more concerned with the individual's progress in Mode III, since you're looking at an individual's file of work ... I've become far less inclined to see a class as a unit and much more inclined to treat them as individuals ..."*

> *"... we can no longer ... hold the golden prizes, the glittering prizes before them, and say this will be of importance ... we've got to start saying we're going to do this now ... because I think it will be meaningful to all of us ...".*

The sentiments expressed by these latter quotations are not mere pious hopes. Schemes have been developed which teachers claim do have an impact on student motivation and achievement, going far beyond any simple instrumentalism. Certain procedures for assessing course work, for example, allow students to submit, say, their ten best pieces of work, for final consideration by their teachers and the moderator, out of perhaps twenty assignments completed during the fourth and fifth years of secondary schooling. With such a system students can be encouraged to improve and resubmit work in which they have shown particular interest and promise. Thus, the overall quality of the final file of work is improved by reflective teaching and learning.

Towards a process model of accountability

Such then are the findings of the study cast in terms of its initial interests. But given current concerns for accountability in education it seems worthwhole to reflect finally on other potentialities of school-based examining, in particular on the potential of the many groups of

self-monitoring teachers which now exist because of their involvement in school-based examining.

There is not space here to review the "accountability movement", but a review of one or two other reviews, so to speak, is probably in order. I think it is reasonable to suggest that the major developments in accountability in recent years have been in test-based accountability. Certainly Atkin (1979) identifies minimal competency testing as "by far the most popular and widespread manifestation of accountability in the late 1970s" (p 10) in the United States. In England we have had test development spurred by the setting up of the Department of Education and Science's Assessment of Performance Unit. The Unit is co-ordinating a national testing programme, which in turn is influencing local authorities to test students in their schools. Such testing of course, is not without its critics. Atkin (1979) goes on to suggest that testing can bring about a narrowing of curricular provision (to that which is regularly tested) and a "levelling downward of educational attainment" (p 19) as coaching all pupils for minimum competency can effectively mean that the minimum becomes a maximum. Previously, Stake and House (quoted in MacDonald (1978)) had drawn attention to other problems associated with test-based accountability, particularly to the subterfuge, the claims and counter-claims, which the use of a single index of school performance would bring.

Having reviewed such American evidence MacDonald (1978) also reviewed moves in England towards using local authority advisers in a more inspectorial role - reporting on school performance to the Local Education Authority (L.E.A.) rather than advising teachers on matters of mutual concern. He

foresaw such activity, along with L.E.A. initiated "self-evaluation" schemes, as similarly leading to dissent and acrimony. Halpin (1981) has described his experience of one such scheme, and this supports MacDonald's argument. Halpin suggests that schemes which emanate from a managerial concern with public accountability, rather than a school's concern with self-improvement, lead inevitably to post-hoc rationalisations, rather than to the description and examination of what actually happens in schools, to rhetorical rather than actual improvement.

Various observers however, have argued that alternative modes of accountability could be and should be initiated. In the same review article, for example, MacDonald (1978), building on House's notion of "responsive accountability", argues that a "process model" of accountability is both feasible and appropriate in current circumstances. He suggests that "a process model of school accountability could be brought about by the initiation and development of school self-reports for the local community" (p 11). He further suggests as a first stage that "the development of school self-reports start as feasibility exercises of a purely internal nature" (p 13) and that a school should ultimately aspire to "compiling accounts of its instructional strategies in different knowledge areas, its choice or textbooks and other materials, its views of the learning needs of the pupils, and its processes of assessment" (p 15).

In one of the most recent publications on accountability in England, Elliott et al (1981) report on the detailed empirical investigations of the Cambridge Accountability Project. Elliott suggests that what he

terms "collegial" accountability is likely to have the most chance of genuine success, because it derives from staff confidence and responds to parental needs for answers, rather than management concerns for contractural scrutiny. He states:

> *"The more the staff of a school feel collectively responsible for the work of the school as a whole, and therefore accountable to each other, they more they can begin to feel collectively accountable to client groups, for instance parents and children."*
>
> (p 8);

and

> *"Many teachers view their accountability and the obligations it entails to flow out of sustained face to face interactions with others. The more 'remote' they felt others to be from their day to day work the less accountability they felt towards them."*
>
> (p 12);

and

> *"In the contractural mode the criteria for evaluation are standardised and responsibility for evaluation hierarchalised. In the answerable mode the criteria evolve as the negotiated outcomes of free and open social interaction, in which all parties have equal opportunities to put forward, defend and criticise arguments."*
>
> (p 22).

However, although Elliott et al demonstrate that some schools in their study were more approachable by parents than others, were in some senses practising collegial accountability, they do not really pin down which extant mechanisms in the system might encourage such practice to develop. Similarly MacDonald does not point to any actual instances of internal or external reporting to support his argument. What I wish to suggest is that school-based examining might be both a focus for the development of confidence in self-reporting and a mechanism which might be used across schools. Of course the practice of school-based examining itself varied greatly from department to department and school to school. But where

departments rather than individuals were involved, meetings had to take place and reports had to be made. Sometimes discussions about textbooks and pedagogy were simply held over morning coffee (though were no less valuable for that), with formal meetings being devoted to marking and moderation, but sometimes discussions of teaching and learning were more formal, with documents produced and policy decisions taken. Just to reiterate:

> *"It still holds the staff together, we still have ... departmental meetings on a regular basis ... it leads to a lot of staff involvement. It's improved our teaching elsewhere in the school ... this feeling of isolation that we have in the classroom has been broken down ...".*

Clearly MacDonald's first step of internal reporting can be located here, as can Elliott's ideas regarding face to face interaction and collective responsibility. Also, a department's final grading meeting which would involve a teacher from another school, as Examination Board moderator, and which would necessitate the production of evidence if disputes arose over particular candidates, would seem to accord with Elliott's idea of free and open debate. Thus the move from purely internal to (at least partly) external reporting is also contained within the procedures of school-based examining. How far parents and pupils could ever get involved in the general reporting and debating of educational provision and teaching methods, let alone assessment processes, is another matter of course. But it does seem as though at least some of the aspirations of a process model of accountability can be met in practice, and that such practice is potentially accessible to more than just a few 'good schools'.

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